

Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability English Language Proficiency Assessment Spring 2007

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

- 1. Who can be an ELPA proctor? We would like to select staff members who will be participating in training.**

An Assessment Proctor can be a teacher's aide, paraprofessional, or other paid district or school staff member. If volunteers must be used, they should be trained with appropriate testing procedures, just like any other proctors. Family members of students in the assessment group should not be used as proctors. Refer to Appendix B in the ELPA Directions for Administration for a proctor's duties. Remember that proctors must be working under the supervision of an Assessment Administrator, who must be a staff member with Michigan educational certification in any field.

- 2. Title III defines English language learners (ELLs) as individuals who are aged 3-21. However, the English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA) is designed to test students in grades K-12. Should districts plan to use other assessments for preschoolers who are aged 3-4?**

Yes.

- 3. How do we pre-ID for private school students? Do we use the same process?**

Non-public (private) schools can pre-identify their ELPA students on the secure site of the Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA) using one of the following four methods:

(a) Pre-ID File Import. Our file requirements can be found on the login page of the OEAA secure site by clicking on the blue Pre-ID File Format link. The file can then be loaded onto the OEAA secure website by the school.

(b) Individual Pre-Identification. Schools can use the Student Search screen to individually identify students who are already in the system that will be administered in the ELPA assessment.

(c) New Student Registration. Schools can use the New Student screen

to individually identify students who have no record on the OEAA secure site and who will participate in the ELPA.

(d) Student Test Cycle Copy. Schools can use the Student Test Cycle Copy screen to copy a group of students that have previously tested into a previous ELPA cycle.

Pre-identification of students on the OEAA secure site is the same for the ELPA as it is for the MEAP, with the exception of choosing the ELPA assessment cycle. The OEAA secure site is located at <http://www.michigan.gov/oeaa-secure>.

4. **Do sections of the ELPA need to be completed in one day, or could they be continued onto the next day?**

Each section or domain of the ELPA needs to be completed in one continuous session unless it has been divided into two parts, such as Writing, which is divided into Writing Conventions and Writing. This was done to better accommodate scheduling, since time required for open-response writing can vary broadly from student to student.

5. **Do ELPA sections need to be given in any particular order?**

No, they can be given in any order.

6. **Will the ELPA score replace a MEAP score? If our ELLs successfully take the MEAP, do they have to take the ELPA?**

The ELPA score can only be used in the place of the English Language Arts (ELA) portion of the MEAP, and only if the student qualifies as “recently arrived.” Recently arrived students are those students who have attended U.S. public schools for twelve months or less at the time of the beginning MEAP assessment window. These students will still need to take the MEAP mathematics, science, or social studies assessments, using accommodations as necessary for their status.

ELLs are to participate in both assessment systems. The MEAP and ELPA are considered to be separate—with different assessment requirements—as defined by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation. The MEAP is the assessment system that the State of Michigan uses to measure student progress with Michigan content standards in mathematics, ELA, science, and social studies. The ELPA is the assessment system that the State of Michigan uses to measure student progress in English language acquisition; it is based on Michigan’s English language proficiency (ELP) standards.

In past years, schools and districts chose from different commercially-available ELP assessments to measure and report student progress in the acquisition of the English language. These scores were used for Title III reporting; now, the results from the ELPA are used for this purpose.

7. We have only a few ELLs in our district. Can the ELPA be given in a one-on-one setting?

Absolutely.

8. Will students who have exited ELL programs and have been designated as Formerly Limited English Proficient (FLEP) be tested with the ELPA?

For this spring, assessment of FLEP students is optional for schools and districts. We certainly encourage the use of the ELPA to assist schools in monitoring their progress. If you choose to assess FLEP students, please order ELPA materials for these students, and mark the appropriate bubble on the answer document to indicate their FLEP status.

If you have exited students from ELL programs before the beginning of the ELPA window during this same school year (2006-2007), these students should still take the ELPA. After the Spring 2007 ELPA, they will not appear in the automatic pre-identification records for later ELPA cycles.

9. Why is the ELPA administered in the spring?

The ELPA replaces the annual springtime assessment of English language proficiency that has been required for Title III reporting. In the past, schools have chosen one of the commercially-available ELP assessments for this purpose.

10. We don't have any ELL programs. Do we need to give the ELPA?

All ELLs who are eligible to receive ELL services need to be assessed, regardless of whether or not they are actually receiving services. If you have students who have been identified as ELLs from the Home Language Survey, they must be assessed for their English language proficiency.

11. **Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) address MEAP and MI - Access, but not the ELPA. If a student takes MI -Access, and this student is an ELL, is this student assessed with the ELPA?**

All students who are eligible for services need to be assessed, including Students with Disabilities (SWDs). We recommend that schools and districts order the appropriate grade level materials for the ELPA. Once received, please review the test materials to see if they can be appropriately used for your SWDs. The ELPA section of the Assessment Accommodation Guidelines may help in this determination. If the ELPA is not appropriate according to a student's IEP, please contact OEAA staff at (877) 560-8378.

12. **What is the AYP expectation for ELLs?**

The assessment performance expectations for ELLs are tied to the Title III reporting for the State of Michigan. The assessment results are reported in terms of an individual student's progress or gains from one year to another.

The results of the ELPA will not directly impact AYP at this time.

13. **When we give the ELPA, do we need to consider exactly what service(s) the student receives, or only that they are eligible to receive service?**

The school or district needs to consider only that the student is eligible for services, not whether the student is receiving services.

14. **Is there a way to receive more information from the State about the ELPA?**

Absolutely—it's called the MDE-ELLA ListServ. Anyone can join and receive automated messages. To join, write an e-mail from the e-mail account you wish to use for the ListServ, typing in "SUB mde-ella" in the subject line and "SUBSCRIBE mde-ella" in the text of the message. You'll get a confirmation from the server, and then you will start receiving messages.

15. **Will MDE automatically send coordinator/administrator manuals, or do we have to request them?**

You should order coordinator/administrator manuals. They are also online—the Test Coordinator's Manual is downloadable from the public

ELPA site at www.michigan.gov/elpa, and the *Directions for Administration* at the various assessment levels are available on the OEAA secure site (once you log in, you will see them on the opening screen).

- 16. In regards to the Speaking portion of the ELPA, do the assessors need to be certified staff? Also, do two people need to listen and score each individual student?**

The staff that administers the speaking portion can be staff that qualifies as assessment proctors as described in the updated OEAA Professional Assessment and Accountability Practices for Educators, August 2005, available for download at www.michigan.gov/oeaa. Proctors work closely with certified staff, who are actually in charge of the assessment administration process. It is important that all staff involved in the assessment process receive appropriate training prior to the administration of the ELPA.

- 17. Can parents “opt out” of testing?**

As with the MEAP, there is no parent exemption from state assessment. According to section 3302 of the NCLB legislation, under Parental Notification, the assessment of English language proficiency precedes parent notification and parental choice to participate or not to participate in the Title III program.

The pool of students to be included in the ELPA is determined when students are identified as eligible for LEP services. In Michigan, the Home Language Survey is used to determine if there is a language other than English used in the home or spoken by the child as the child's native tongue. If either condition is true, then the student is assessed to determine English language proficiency.

- 18. Do foreign exchange students eligible for the ELPA, even if they are grade 12 students?**

Yes, if they meet the criteria above using the Home Language Survey.

- 19. Do we assign students to the ELPA based on their grade level in school or to the grade level equivalent of their English language skills? For example, what do we do with a 9th grade student who has English skills on par with a second grader?**

Students are to take the ELPA that match their grade level of

enrollment. If students are enrolled in grade 9, they would take the ELPA at Assessment Level V.

20. Can additional materials now be ordered on the Web site?

The Harcourt Spectrum site is open to take orders for additional materials until Thursday, April 26, 2007.

21. Are the Speaking rubrics still available for training?

There are five rubrics for all levels of the ELPA, which are downloadable from www.michigan.gov/elpa (see the "General" heading). These are: Sentence Repeat, Short Conversation, Storytelling, Story Retell, and Guided Discussion. Note that each of these has different maximum scores.

In addition, your District ELPA Coordinator was sent a special Speaking Item Scoring Training DVD for use with assessment administrators and proctors. If your district did not receive this DVD, please contact Phil Chase at chasep@michigan.gov to request a copy.

22. Are the teleconferences from this past January and February still available to review?

Yes, they can be streamed in video format from www.mistreamnet.com.

23. Will the ELPA replace the Woodcock-Muñoz test?

The ELPA is now used as the official State of Michigan assessment for Title III annual reporting purposes. The Woodcock-Muñoz and other English language proficiency assessments may continue to be used by schools and districts for diagnostic purposes.

24. If a student scores higher on the ELPA than on the Woodcock-Muñoz test, will this cause him or her to be ineligible for ELL services?

No. Placement and exit decisions for Title III programs are based on a number of factors, only one of which is a score on an English language proficiency assessment.

25. Should we test ELLs and bilingual education students that are also in special education services?

Yes. All students who are eligible for Title III services—whether or not they are currently receiving those services—need to be assessed. This includes students with disabilities and Section 504 students.

26. **On the Sentence Repeat section of the Speaking test, can a proctor repeat a prompt for a student if he or she asks to hear it again?**

The Directions for Administration specifies what is read to the student. The prompt is read only once. Note that a sample is provided for each type of prompt in the ELPA. While the sample is given, the staff member giving the assessment can check for understanding and can remind the students that the prompt will be only read one time.

27. **Last year's ELPA reports also had "Comprehension." The ELPA features four sections: Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking? When are the students assessed for their comprehension?**

Items in the Listening and Reading sections that match those ELP standards that have been identified as contributing to Comprehension will be used to report this score.

28. **Once a student tests as "Proficient," do they have to take the ELPA again the next year?**

At this time, testing of the student is based on a student's eligibility for Limited English Proficiency services. Eligibility is based on locally-determined factors which may include a number of criteria in addition to a "Proficient" score on an English language proficiency assessment.

29. **Do we read the question answer options to the students on the Listening section?**

Yes. The test questions (item stems) and answer choices may be read out loud to all students taking the Listening section of the ELPA. The Listening CDs and tapes automatically include the reading of all textual answer choices.

30. **What about preschoolers? Is there any formal assessment for their English language proficiency?**

Not at this time. The federal requirements specify an annual assessment for grades K-12. However, based on interest from Michigan's ELL field, some initial plans are being made to provide an English language proficiency assessment for preschoolers in "checklist" format.

31. Are extra blank documents automatically sent as part of our orders, or do we need to update that with Harcourt?

An automatic overage of 5% was sent along to all schools and districts. If, upon receiving all materials, including extra blank documents, you discover that you still need additional materials, please contact your district ELPA coordinator, who can log into the Harcourt Spectrum site to place these additional orders.

32. Can ISDs get extra materials for distribution to buildings if needed?

For this spring 2007 cycle, Harcourt is sending additional materials orders directly to districts for use in schools. This will facilitate the accounting for the return of all secure ELPA materials at the close of testing. Each secure item is scanned upon return to Harcourt.

33. If we see that a pre-printed label is incorrect, can we make a new label?

You can make any demographic information changes on the OEAA secure site for this spring's assessment cycle. As you do this, make sure that the student's grade level and all other demographic information are correct. Then you can print a new label and affix it carefully over the existing label on the student's test booklet or answer document.

34. What if we have an ELL student who is also in special education—do we indicate "Special Ed" on the ELPA?

We already have that information from the SRSD data. If the student is given testing accommodations, however, please do make sure to indicate these on the demographic form.

35. Should we administer the ELPA Initial Screening to students who enroll after the Spring 2007 window Yes. Please continue to use the current ELPA Initial Screening until a new form becomes available, which is scheduled for late August.

36. Will a district get multiple forms within the same assessment level?

We have worked with Harcourt to provide one form to smaller districts; multiple forms are needed for districts with large numbers of students.

37. On the Speaking Item Training DVD, we noticed that the administrator closed the book before the student retold the story. Is this done at all grade levels?

The instruction that appears in the Directions for Administration is that the proctor turns the book over so that the student cannot simply read back the story on the page. (On the video, the book was closed and placed face-up because the sample booklets that were generated for the taping of the students had an item on the back, and this might have distracted students.) However, proctors of the ELPA will turn books over, for students of all levels.

38. If a student was registered in the fall through the ELPA Initial Screening, will they need a barcode label?

No, this student would have been added to the pre-identified list and thus will receive a pre-printed test booklet or answer document from Harcourt.

39. I'm giving the ELPA to my students, but there seem to be a number of mistakes in the Directions for Administration. For example, every few questions, the directions don't seem to match what the students have in their test booklets. What do I do?

Check the section you are reading from in the Directions for Administration. There is more than one form, or version of the test, in each assessment level. The form number on the student test booklet should match the blue tab you see on the sides of the pages in the Directions for Administration. If you read from the wrong form, what you read will not match what your students see for some of the questions. Also, as you administer the test, ensure that the students are all on the same page numbers you are referring to as you read from the directions.

40. How did my school receive a pre-identified (pre-printed) ELPA test for some students and not for others?

A student would have received a pre-identified test if he or she took the ELPA in the spring of 2006 and got a score of less than "Proficient," took the ELPA Initial Screening in the fall of 2007 and got a score of less than "Proficient," and/or was not exited from LEP services in the Single Record Student Database (SRSD) count submitted by the district this past fall. Some other students might have been determined by the district to be eligible for ELL services (such as students who scored "Proficient" but were eligible in ELL services according to the district's pre-determined criteria). These other students would need to use tests with labels printed at the school.

41. I heard about the state's ListServ for ELL information. Can I join, and if so, how do I get on?

Many of our ELL paraprofessionals, teachers, department leaders, and program administrators have joined the MDE-ELLA ListServ, which keeps them at the forefront of announcements related to the ELPA and other issues related to assessing ELLs. Membership is open. If you would like to join, send an e-mail message to listserv@listserv.michigan.gov with the words "SUB mde-ella" in the Subject line and the words "SUBSCRIBE mde-ella" in the message text. You will receive an automatic confirmation, and then you'll begin to receive messages to the e-mail account that you are using to subscribe to the ListServ.